

# NATO: Rewarding Service in the Alliance

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**S**ERVICE WITH NATO offers U.S. Army officers leadership challenges that, if properly mastered, can lead to language and cultural knowledge while fostering patience, steadfastness, and the ability to listen to others. According to the 2005 U.S. Department of Defense's (DOD's) Defense Language Transformation Roadmap, "[e]stablishing a new 'global footprint' for DOD and transitioning to a more expeditionary force will bring increased requirements for language and regional knowledge to work with new coalition partners in a wide variety of activities, often with little or no notice. This new approach to warfighting in the 21st century will require forces that have foreign language capabilities beyond those generally available in today's forces."<sup>1</sup>

DOD is taking officer language training quite seriously. The Defense Language Transformation Roadmap requires junior officers to complete language training; allocates 1-year assignments for junior officers to serve with a foreign military or national constabulary force; and stipulates that general officers/flag officers must have foreign language ability.<sup>2</sup> A tour with NATO will give Army officers many opportunities to acquire language skills and learn about foreign cultures. Officers will also learn how to conduct business in an alliance in which each country has a national agenda.

At its creation half a century ago, NATO focused primarily on the defense and security of its members. From 1945 to 1949, West European countries and their North American allies grew concerned about the Soviet's expansionist policies. With the Brussels Treaty of 1948, five of the countries developed a strong common defense system to resist ideological, political, and military threats to their security. Negotiations with the United States and Canada

culminated in the Treaty of Washington in April 1949, bringing into being the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) to serve as a common security system based on a partnership among 12 countries.

Over the next half-century, the NATO alliance continued to expand. Greece and Turkey joined in 1952, the Federal Republic of Germany in 1955, and Spain in 1982. In 1999, the alliance inducted the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland, all former Soviet satellites. That year, NATO also launched the Membership Action Plan to help aspiring countries join the alliance by focusing their preparations on meeting specific goals and priorities.<sup>3</sup>

At its Prague Summit in November 2002, NATO invited Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia to participate in talks about the formal obligations of NATO membership and reforms needed to enhance their contributions to the alliance. In 2004, after issuing letters of intent to the invited countries, NATO prepared accession protocols, the allies duly signed and ratified them, and the seven countries became full members. NATO now includes 26 nations, but that number might soon increase: The Istanbul Summit on 28 June 2004 "reaffirmed that NATO's door remains open to new members" and encouraged Albania, Croatia, and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia to "continue the reforms necessary to progress towards NATO membership."<sup>4</sup> More recently, on 21 April 2005 in Vilnius, Lithuania, NATO invited Ukraine to begin "intensified dialog" on Ukraine's aspirations to membership. (See figure 1.)

While NATO continues to increase in size, it is also transforming operationally. In May 1991, Yugoslavia's defense minister declared that his country was in a state of civil war, and the Balkans quickly became the focus of the world's attention. Paving the way for intervening in the Balkans, NATO adopted a new strategy, a Declaration on Peace and Cooperation that included the participation of nine non-NATO countries.

The first NATO combat operation under the new strategy took place on 28 February 1994, when four NATO fighters shot down four Bosnian jets for violating a U.N. no-fly zone. In December 1995,

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*The views expressed in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the position of the Department of the Army, the Department of Defense, Military Review, or any other government office or agency. —Editor*

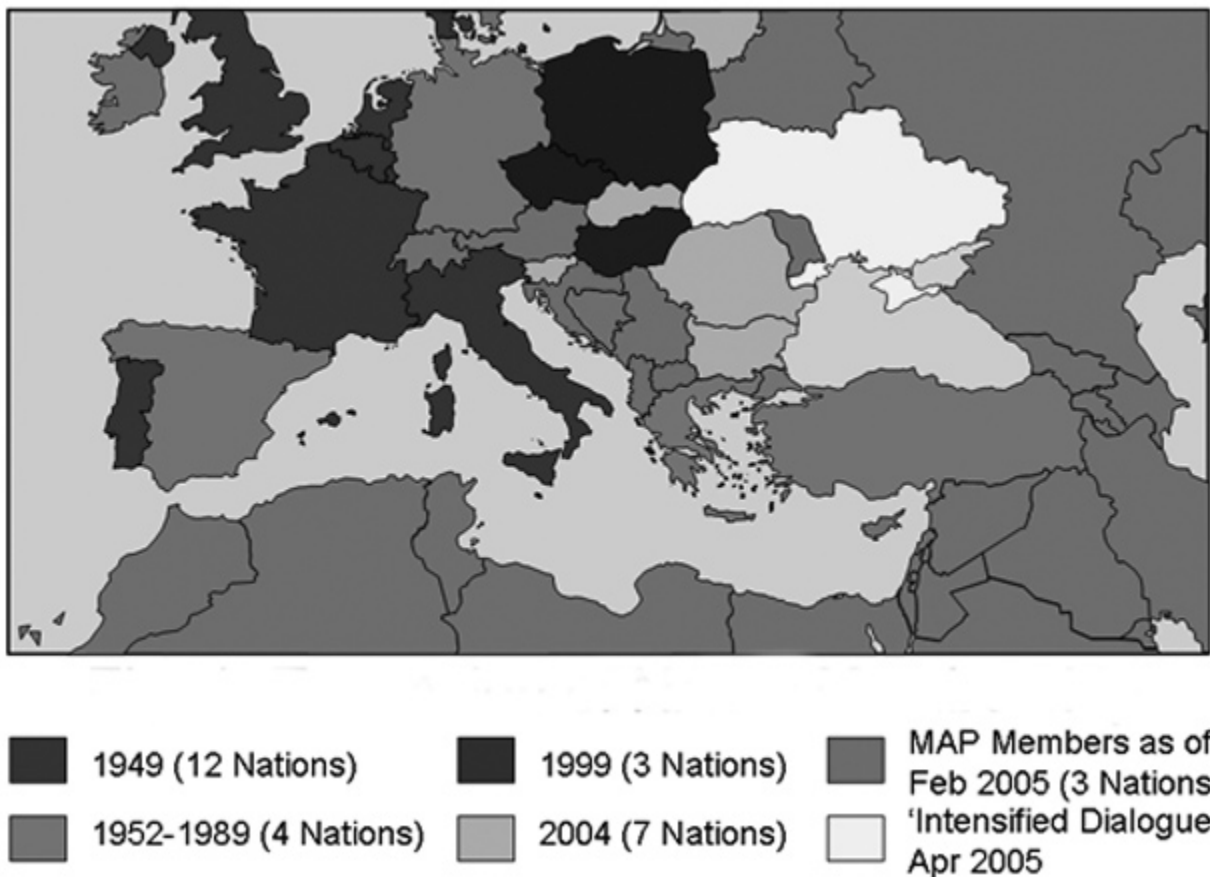


Figure 1. Expansion of NATO membership.

NATO sent a multinational implementation force to the Balkans and a stabilization force was sent a year later. As a result of such demonstrations of resolve, NATO stabilized the entire Balkans area. Through exercises and training missions, it continued to ensure stability. In 1999, when a crisis erupted in Serbia's province of Kosovo, NATO's decision to respond promptly and forcefully helped avert a humanitarian disaster and reinforced the organization's critical role in crisis management. The alliance's air campaign was decisive, and its force deployment created the basis for long-term peace and stability in Kosovo.

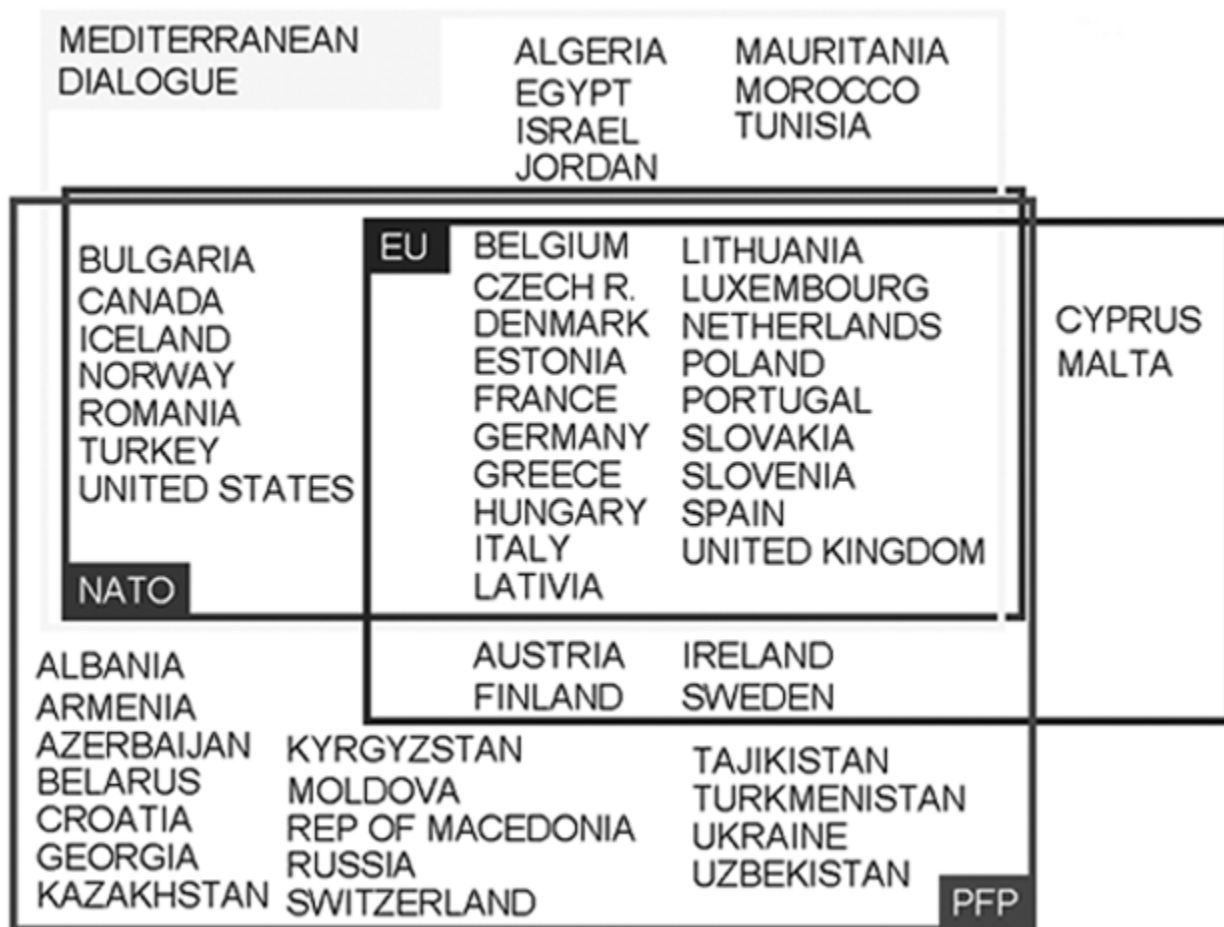
NATO continues to contribute to security in the Balkans, with headquarters in Pristina, Kosovo; Sarajevo, Bosnia; Skopje, Macedonia; and Tirana, Albania; and with higher headquarters at Joint Force Command, Naples (JFCN). The number and type of NATO forces deployed are constantly reviewed at the tactical level in country, the operational level at JFCN, and the strategic level at Supreme Headquarters, Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE).

The periodic mission review (PMR) is the analytical tool of choice. NATO commanders conduct PMRs every 6 months to let higher echelons know what must be done to accomplish the mission. In turn, higher

commanders use PMRs to reevaluate and recommend changes to the mission, and nations approve PMRs to generate the required forces. The PMR force-generation process is just one of many areas that offer a U.S. Army officer serving with NATO the chance to develop leadership skills, become aware of other nations' civilian and military cultures, and understand a variety of national agendas. Understanding the interests of other alliance members helps one serve both national and NATO interests; it is a prerequisite to working toward common objectives to accomplish common political goals.

In addition to its ongoing effort in the Balkans, NATO continued to pursue into the new millennium its major missions of defending peace and projecting stability. Thus, the alliance became increasingly involved with its non-NATO partners and enlarged its exercise program. (See figure 2.) But while NATO maintained order in the Balkans, took stock of its growing membership, courted non-NATO partners, and looked to the future for ways to better maintain peace, the horrific events of 11 September 2001 occurred. NATO was propelled to greater reform.

Acting on U.S. requests, NATO implemented Article 5 of the Washington Treaty for the first time in



**Figure 2. NATO, European Union, and Partners for Peace nations.**

history.<sup>5</sup> In its initial response, the alliance deployed Airborne Warning and Control System (AWACS) aircraft to the United States, sent elements of its Standing Naval Forces to the Eastern Mediterranean, and initiated operations to begin its transformation to countering terrorism.

One such operation was Operation Active Endeavor (OAE), conducted by Allied Maritime Component Command Naples through a task force deployed to the Eastern Mediterranean on 26 October 2001. During the first 2 months of deployment, Standing Naval Force Mediterranean established contact with 1,700 merchant vessels. In 2003, OAE began escorting high-value, nonmilitary ships traversing the Strait of Gibraltar (a potential terrorist attack site). During March 2004, OAE expanded operations to cover the entire Mediterranean Sea.

In the first-ever NATO mission outside the Euro-Atlantic area, the organization participated in the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) to establish a safe, secure environment in Kabul, Afghanistan. The alliance's North Atlantic Council (NAC) provided the political direction for the mission

and, based the Council's guidance, SHAPE provided strategic command and control (C2) through Joint Force Command-Brunssum. The mission now is to provide security, help the Afghan Government expand its authority, spread the rule of law, and reconstruct the country. With NATO helping, ISAF has undertaken civil-military cooperation projects to rebuild medical facilities, renovate schools, and provide fresh water, electric power, and shelter. In January 2006, ISAF gave security assistance to more than half of Afghanistan through nine NATO-ISAF provincial reconstruction teams and two forward support bases.

In 2004 NATO agreed to help the Iraqi Interim Government (IIG) train security forces.<sup>6</sup> NATO's second mission outside the Euro-Atlantic area, the NATO Training Implementation Mission in Iraq, identified training opportunities for Iraqi Security Forces, trained headquarters personnel, and liaised with the IIG and Multinational Forces—Iraq. The training mission involves both the Allied Command Transformation and Allied Command Operations. A NAC decision on 8 October 2004 appointed

U.S. Army Lieutenant General David H. Petraeus as commander of the NATO mission to establish a permanent C2 arrangement. The decision capitalized on the fact that Petraeus commanded the Multinational Security Transition Command—Iraq, which was already training Iraqi military and police forces.

NATO began training Iraqis from the Ministry of Defense and the Ministry of Interior in August 2004 in Baghdad's International Zone. The NATO Training Mission-Iraq set up an Iraqi-chaired Training Equipment Coordination Committee to prioritize requirements for training, education, and equipment. Interim Iraqi Government President Sheikh Ghazi Al-Yawar visited NATO Headquarters in September 2004 to brief the NAC on the political and security situation. The NATO mission also received praise from the commander in chief of U.S. forces. In a meeting at NATO Headquarters, U.S. President George W. Bush said: "The NATO training mission is an important mission, because after all, the success of Iraq depends upon the capacity and the willingness of the Iraqis to defend their own selves against terrorists." Asked whether the mission was enough, Bush emphasized, "NATO is doing a vital mission, which is to help an officer corps emerge."<sup>7</sup>

In addition to peacekeeping in the Balkans and Afghanistan and training and equipping forces in Iraq, NATO has also been involved in such highly visible events as support to the African Union Mission in Sudan and the 2004 Olympic and Paralympic Games in Athens. In Operation Distinguished Games, NATO supported Greece and helped ensure the safe conduct of the games. The support lasted 60 days and consisted of—

- Air coverage by AWACS aircraft.
- Maritime assistance during Task Force Endeavor with seven surface ships, one submarine, and maritime patrol aircraft.
- Chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear (CBRN) assistance with the deployment of a multinational CBRN battalion.
- Enhanced intelligence-sharing of crime and terrorism information.
- Coordination of assistance for civil emergency contingencies.

Seven AWACS aircraft conducted 122 sorties in support of the Olympics, and 210 people, using equipment from Belgium, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Italy, Poland, and Spain, complemented Hellenic CBRN capabilities. Twelve NATO nations shared intelligence, and the Joint Information Analysis Center at JFCN, the Hellenic National Defense General Staff, and NATO's Forward Command Element in Athens coordinated the effort.

In all, NATO contributed significantly to point and regional security.

The centerpiece of NATO transformation is the NATO Response Force (NRF), which was introduced at the Prague Summit in November 2002 and approved in June 2003 in Brussels. On 13 October 2004, the Supreme Allied Commander, Europe, announced that the NRF had reached an initial operational capability of approximately 17,000 troops.

The NRF is a coherent, high-readiness, joint, technologically advanced, flexible, deployable, interoperable, and sustainable multinational force tailored for a specific mission and able to move quickly to wherever it is needed. National forces rotate through periods of training and certification, followed by a 6-month operational stand-by phase. Allied Command Operations generates the NRF through SHAPE. Allied Command Transformation develops future capabilities and refines the NRF concept based on joint lessons learned. The NRF, the driving force to improve NATO capabilities and force planning, is an essential element of the transformation agenda.

To hone its out-of-area force-projection concept skills, the NRF completed Noble Javelin 05 (28 March to 12 April 2005) in the Canary Islands. With 3,000 participants from 16 NATO nations (1,700 from land and air components and the deployed Joint Task Force Headquarters and 1,300 from the ship's crew), the exercise was the first time NRF components deployed from their home bases to practice the NRF concept. An NRF full-operational capability is scheduled for 2006 following Exercise Steadfast Jaguar 06, which will take place in June in the Cape Verde Islands.

Although NATO has a robust military command structure, it is nonetheless a primarily political alliance of 26 nations. Decisionmaking is by consensus, national caveats limit the control of forces, and operational capability is limited to the forces member nations supply. These constraints have a tremendous effect on operations and, therefore, PMRs are necessary to ascertain if parts of a mission are beyond the capability of the forces committed to it.

Another challenge is transformation throughout the entire alliance structure. Military transformation is on track, but political transformation has not progressed as most would have liked. NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer has stated: "If we want to guide military transformation in a coherent, multinational way, then we need full, open, and transparent political discussions."<sup>8</sup> Lethargic funding and decisionmaking processes are reminiscent of the Cold War era when NATO was a static fixture and there was no NRF. The



alliance needs new systems to provide rapid support to commanders tasked to implement NAC decisions in a timely manner.

As the United States transforms its own military, it must take a leading role in NATO's transformation as well. The 2002 U.S. National Security Strategy declares that "[t]he alliance must be able to act wherever our interests are threatened, creating Coalitions under NATO's own mandate, as well as contributing to mission-based Coalitions. To achieve this, the United States must:

- expand NATO's membership to those democratic nations willing and able to share the burden of defending and advancing our common interests;

- ensure that the military forces of NATO nations have appropriate combat contributions to make in Coalition warfare;

- develop planning processes to enable those contributions to become effective multinational fighting forces;

- take advantage of the technological opportunities and economies of scale in our defence spending to transform NATO military forces so they dominate potential aggressors and diminish our vulnerabilities;

- streamline and increase the flexibility of command structures to meet new operational demands and the associated requirements of training, integrating, and experimenting with new force configurations; and

- maintain the ability to work and fight together as allies even as we take the necessary steps to transform and modernize our forces."<sup>9</sup>

U.S. leadership within NATO can help implant elements of the National Security Strategy. This alone is a salient reason why service in the alliance is service to the Nation.

In a speech at West Point in 2002, Bush stated: "When the great powers share common values, we are better able to confront serious regional conflicts together, better able to cooperate in preventing the spread of violence or economic chaos. . . . Today, from the Middle East to South Asia, we are gathering broad international Coalitions to increase the pressure for peace. . . . America needs partners to preserve the peace, and we will work with every nation that shares this noble goal."<sup>10</sup> As Bush notes, Coalition building is an important endeavor for the professional U.S. Army officer. A NATO officer is, by definition, a Coalition builder.

Even with significant challenges to its transformation, NATO is especially valuable to the fight against global terrorism. Its size alone (26 nations and growing) gives legitimacy to NATO

operations. Moreover, because it is an international organization under a single (NATO) flag, member countries can coordinate more easily. For individual officers, NATO offers unique opportunities to develop leadership skills and learn about joint and combined operations. In sum, service with the alliance benefits the individual Army officer and leader, the Nation, NATO member nations, and the alliance collectively. It should be sought after. **MR**

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## NOTES

1. U.S. Department of Defense (DOD), *Defense Language Transformation Roadmap* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office [GPO], January 2005), 3, on-line at <[www.defenselink.mil/news/Mar2005/d20050330roadmap.pdf](http://www.defenselink.mil/news/Mar2005/d20050330roadmap.pdf)>, accessed 19 January 2006.

2. *Ibid.*, 16.

3. *NATO Handbook* (Brussels: NATO Office of Information and Press, 2001), 65, on-line at <[www.nato.int/docu/handbook/2001/index.htm](http://www.nato.int/docu/handbook/2001/index.htm)>, accessed 19 January 2006. As designed, the Membership Action Plan has caused aspiring countries to establish interministerial meetings at the national level to coordinate their efforts to meet the alliance's goals and match its priorities.

4. NATO, "Istanbul Summit Communiqué Issued by the Heads of State and Government Participating in the Meeting of the North Atlantic Council," press release, 28 June 2004, on-line at <[www.nato.int/docu/pr/2004/p04-096e.htm](http://www.nato.int/docu/pr/2004/p04-096e.htm)>, accessed 11 January 2006.

5. NATO, "The North Atlantic Treaty," art. 5, Washington, D.C., 4 April 1949, says: "The Parties agree that an armed attack against one or more of them in Europe or North America shall be considered an attack against them all," to which they will respond individually and in concert.

6. NATO press release.

7. The White House, Office of the Press Secretary, "President and Secretary General de Hoop Scheffer Discuss NATO Meeting," President George W. Bush remarks at the Joseph Luns Press Theatre, NATO Headquarters, Brussels, 22 February 2005, on-line at <[www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2005/02/20050222-3.html](http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2005/02/20050222-3.html)>, accessed 22 December 2005.

8. Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, NATO Secretary General, speech at the NATO Annual Conference, Brussels, 14 April 2005, on-line at <[www.nato.int/docu/speech/2005/s050414a.htm](http://www.nato.int/docu/speech/2005/s050414a.htm)>, accessed 2 February 2006.

9. U.S. Department of State, "Develop Agendas for Cooperative Action with the Other Main Centers of Global Power," U.S. National Security Strategy of the United States, Washington, D.C., 17 September 2002, 25-26, on-line at <[www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/wh/15429.htm](http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/wh/15429.htm)>, accessed 19 January 2006.

10. The White House, "President Bush Delivers Graduation Speech at West Point," U.S. Military Academy, West Point, New York, 1 June 2002, on-line at <[www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/06/20020601-3.html](http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/06/20020601-3.html)>, accessed 22 December 2005.

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